

## "The Coming of the Fairies" Made Real by Conan Doyle

English Author Makes Serious Effort to Prove That Children Have a Solid Foundation for Belief in Elfin Creatures; Photographs Real, He Says

By Isabel Ross

In "The Coming of the Fairies," just published by the George H. Doran Company, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle makes a serious presentation of his case in favor of the existence of fairies. Not with the whimsicality of Barrie pleading for his fantastic brain children, nor with the mystic shading that George Russell applies to his fairy folk, but with a humorless, analytical touch Sir Arthur probes the subject, exposes its weaknesses, argues in its favor and leaves his readers to draw their own conclusions.

The book is the result of a long investigation by Sir Arthur and E. L. Gardner, a prominent member of the executive committee of the Theosophical Society in England, into the case of the Cottingley Fairies. It is illustrated with pictures of the diaphanous little beings that the Carpenter girls are supposed to have photographed. Two of these pictures were published in The Tribune when Sir Arthur was in New York last spring.

Although certain that a strong prima facie case has been built up for them, Sir Arthur hesitates to say that there is no conceivable loophole left for error. He quotes at length the findings of Mr. Gardner, who investigated the girls' story and went over the ground where the pictures were taken. He cites the expert opinions of camera men. He goes exhaustively, if without much purpose, into the statements of other people who claim to have seen fairies. He even goes so far as to say that his children have seen little creatures that they took to be fairies.

### Expects Cry of "Fake"

Summing up, he says: "Should the incidents here narrated, and the photographs attached, hold their own against the criticism which they will excite, it is no exaggeration to say that they will mark an epoch in human thought. I put them and all the evidence before the public for examination and judgment. If I am myself asked whether I consider the case to be absolutely and finally proved, I should answer that in order to remove the last faint shadow of doubt I should wish to see the result repeated before a disinterested witness. At the same time I recognize the difficulty of such a request, since rare results must be obtained under conditions which cannot be obtained under any other. But, short of absolute proof, I consider, after carefully going into every possible source of error, that a strong prima facie case has been built up. "The cry of 'fake' is sure to be raised and will make some impression upon those who have not had the opportunity of knowing the people concerned, or the place. On the photographic side every objection has been considered and adequately met. The pictures stand or fall together. Both are false, or both are true. All the circumstances point to the latter alternative, and yet, in a matter involving so tremendous a new departure, one needs overpowering evidence be-

fore one can say that there is no conceivable loophole for error."

Camera Caught the Fairies  
The story of the Cottingley fairies is the story of Elsie and Frances Carpenter, the niece and daughter of an electrician, aged sixteen and ten years, who were always telling tales of having seen fairies. They were given a camera and when the first plate was developed, the fairies were said to be there. On different occasions they got similar pictures of fairies and gnomes, but never before witnesses. Sir Arthur has convinced that no photographic trick was employed, consciously or unconsciously. He quotes the report turned in by Mr. Gardner after a thorough study of the case:

"Extraordinary and amazing as these photographs may appear, I am now quite convinced of their entire genuineness, as indeed would every one else who had the same evidence of transparent honesty and simplicity that I am adding nothing by way of explanation or theories of my own, though the need for two people, preferably children, is fairly obvious in the photographing, in order to assist in the strengthening of the etheric bodies."

To the objections raised by photographers that the fairy figures show quite different shadows to those of a human figure Sir Arthur proffers the explanation that ectoplasm has a faint luminosity of its own which would largely modify shadows.

### Approved by Expert

Various photographic companies, Sir Arthur admits, were of the opinion that the pictures were made from models. It was argued that similar effects could be produced by clever studio painting and modeling. These theories he believes to have been disproved on the evidence presented by Snelling, a well-known photographer, who said of them: "These two negatives are entirely genuine, unfaked photographs of single exposure, open-air work, show movement in the fairy figures, and there is no trace whatever of studio work involving card or paper models, dark backgrounds, painted figures, etc. In my opinion, they are both straight, untouched pictures."

Sir Arthur's own study of the pictures under high-power lens convinces him that the fairies have the double pipe which the ancients associated with fauns and naiads. "But if pipes, why not everything else?" he asks rhetorically. "Does it not suggest a complete range of utensils and instruments for their own life? Their clothing is substantial enough. It seems to me that with fuller knowledge and with fresh means of vision these people are destined to become just as solid and real as the Eskimos. What joy is in the complete abandon of their little graceful figures as they let themselves go in the dance? They may have their snadows and trials as we have, but at least there is a great gladness manifest in this demonstration of their life."

May Be "Thought Forms"  
Straying further into the realms of speculation Sir Arthur finds that the elves are a compound of the human and the butterfly, while the gnome is more of a moth. Can these be thought forms? he asks. The fact that they

## Sprites of Fairyland Caught by Camera



This elfin creature at the left is posed on bush leaves offering a posy of harebells to her little flesh-and-blood friend. The leaping fairy at play with another little girl is shown at the right.

are so like our conventional ideas of fairies would seem to strengthen this theory. These little figures, he says, seem to have an objective reality, as we have ourselves, even if their vibrations should prove to be such that it takes either psychic power or a sensitive plate to record them.

"If they are conventional it may be that fairies have really been seen in every generation and so some correct description of them has been retained," he says. "One or two consequences of all this are obvious. The experiences of children will be taken more seriously. Other well-authenticated cases will come along. These little folk who appear to be our neighbors, with only some small difference of vibration to separate us, will become familiar. The thought of them, even when unseen, will add a charm to every brook and valley and give romantic interest to every country walk. The recognition of their existence will jolt the material twentieth century mind out of its heavy ruts in the mud and will make it admit that there is a glamour and a mystery to life."

The fairy pictures never published until this book came out are the Flying Fairy, the fairy offering a posy of harebells to Elsie and the fairies having their sun bath in a bower. Mr. Gardner sees these fairies not as fashionably-coiffed French dolls but as "super-Pavlovas in miniature."

### Even Heard Them Play

The fairy offering a flower to Iris is a model of gentle and dignified pose, he says, but the third picture of the fairy's bower finds him gasping out excited superlatives. All the fairies are supposed to be exquisite in coloring. The swish of their wings and the faint quivering of their pipes were distinctly heard by the little girls on a calm day, according to the story told by Elsie and Frances. A clairvoyant who visited the woods with the little girls submitted a report from which Sir Arthur quotes at length. Among

other things she pictures Elsie seeing a flight of little mannikins, implike, racing across the fields. Or, again, a fairy band casting a bright radiance over the field with a director "autocratic and definite in her orders."

Later Elsie sees a tall and stately fairy coming across the field to a clump of harebells. In its arms is something which may be a fairy baby, wrapped in gauzy substance. Other impressions are of four-footed creatures being ridden by winged figures who are thin and bend over their mounts like jockeys, and, lastly, "seven wee fairies quite near—very little figures—lying face downward." Frances sees fairies as large as herself, the clairvoyant says, and fairies clothed in iridescent, shimmering, golden light.

### The Voice of the Skeptic

Sir Arthur does not spare himself. He freely quotes the criticism to which he was subjected when some of the pictures first appeared. For instance, Maurice Hewlett wrote of him:

"Knowing children, and knowing that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has legs, I decide that the Misses Carpenter have pulled one of them. Meantime, I suggest to him that epochs are born, not made."

Major Hall-Edwards, the famous authority on radium, writing in "The Birmingham Weekly Post," said: "On the evidence I have no hesitation in saying that these photographs could have been 'faked.' I criticize the attitude of those who declared there is something supernatural in the circumstances attending the taking of these pictures because, as a medical man, I believe that the inoculation of such absurd ideas into the minds of children will result in later life in manifestation of nervous disorder and mental disturbances."

Sir Arthur claims that if the confidence of children could be gained and they were led to speak freely a surprising number would confess to having seen fairies. Here he quotes his

own children as having seen a single little figure twice in the garden and once in the nursery. His book, at its best, is a compilation of the experiences of people who claim to have seen various forms of fairy life.

He quotes the theosophic view of fairies, which is that their bodies are of a density lighter than gaseous vapors. In their own way they are as real as we are and perform functions in connection with plant life of an important character. They are not born and do not die as we do. They have little or no mentality—simply a gladness, irresponsible joyousness. Their bodies are not clean-cut like ours, but are small, hazy and like luminous clouds of color with a brighter, spark-like nucleus. Their wings resemble the limbs of animals, but there is no articulation and no venation. They are known as "streaming emanations." Their nourishment is absorbed by a rhythmic breathing or pulse. The perfume of flowers is their delight.

They have no real birth nor death, simply a gradual emergence and a return to a subtler state of being. They have no sex, other than a process which corresponds to the fusion and budding of our familiar simple animals, with the addition, toward the end of the cycle, of fusion or reassembly into a larger unit. They have no language of words, but communicate by inflexion and gesture, like domestic animals.

Having thus given the general theory of the place in creation of such creatures as defined by theosophy, the only system of thought which has found room for them, Sir Arthur says: "I do not myself contend that the proof is as overwhelming as in the case of spiritualistic phenomena. . . . The series of incidents here set forth represent either the most elaborate and ingenious hoax ever played upon the public or else they constitute an event in human history."

## Edison Fans Nearly Mob Him in Greeting At Electrical Show

Says Machines Will Do All the Work in 25 Years; 50,000 Attend the Last Day of the Exhibit

More than 50,000 persons attended the closing session yesterday of the annual electrical and industrial exhibition at Grand Central Palace and, according to Thomas Edison, the guest of honor, every one of them tried to crowd into the narrow reception room of the Edison museum when he stopped off there before making a tour of his relics.

It was planned to have him visit the museum, which is made up of all his early experiments, and chat over old times with those associates of his early days now living. The museum looked more like the scene of a fresh man came rish than a sanctuary, however, with hundreds of persons pushing each other in an effort to get close to

the great inventor and all of them cheering him.

It all seemed to please Mr. Edison, who smilingly pushed his way through the crowd, shaking hands with as many as were in reach. He was much interested when taken to the cigar-making machine, which has 3,000 moving parts. The inventor went insane after inventing the machine.

"That's what happens to all inventors," he said. "They go crazy or go to the ptohouse. But we're a great lot just the same. In twenty-five years there won't be any work for you fellows to do. We will have invented machines to do everything. That is, there won't be any work except for inventors. We'll go on trying to invent something to take the place of machines."

"There is going to be a remarkable advance in the realm of electricity in the next fifteen years. We are making unbelievable progress, opening new fields every day and I really believe the science will be revolutionized in that time. The future is unlimited. Everything will be done by natural elements such as electricity."

Edison then threw the switch on the old Jumbo generator, the first generator built for commercial lighting. "There were six of them at the old Pearl Street station," he said, "and we never could synchronize them. They

wouldn't stay in time and they jerked so a man got seasick walking across the floor. How the devil do you suppose they ever got all the stuff together?" he asked laughingly.

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